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'DEFENSE INITIATIVE' AIMS TO UNDERMINE STABILITY

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[Editorial article: "On the United States' So-Called 'Strategic Defense Initiative'" -- capitalized passages published in boldface]

[Text] The results of the Geneva meeting between A.A. Gromyko, CPSU Central Committee Politburo member, first deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and USSR foreign minister, and U.S. Secretary of State G. Shultz generated a broad positive response throughout the world. The path has been opened toward concrete and purposeful talks on the formulation of effective measures which aim to prevent an arms race in space and end it on earth.

It is a question of new talks encompassing a package of organically interconnected questions concerned with preventing the space militarization and reducing nuclear arms -- both strategic and medium-range. In view of the conditions that have objectively taken shape at this time, any other approach to the matter is impossible. A precise reflection of this was provided by the Soviet-U.S. joint statement recently published. During the upcoming talks only strict observance, in all its parts, of the accord reached can ensure real progress along the path of ending the arms race, eliminating the threat of nuclear war, and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons, the report on the CPSU Central Committee Politburo examination of the question of the results of the Geneva talks stresses.

The path toward the adoption of the agreed decisions will not be easy, of course. But the Soviet Union is ready to go its part of the way. It has a right to expect the same from the United States.

At the same time attention is attracted by the fact that in the United States not only the mass media but also administration spokesmen are not ceasing to make statements whose central theme consists of appeals not to abandon plans for extending the arms race into space, to move toward the creation of a large-scale antimissile defense system, and to attempt to use the upcoming talks to legalize such schemes. Incidentally, at the beginning of January the White House distributed a special brochure entitled "Presidential Strategic Defense Initiative" (this is the official name given in the United States to the "star wars" program advanced by the President in March 1983) in which the militarization of space is elevated to the rank of a priority task of U.S. state policy through the end of the century.

The most important objective of the "strategic defense initiative" is proclaimed to be the creation of an all-embracing antimissile defense system which, according to Washington's assurances, could protect the whole of U.S. territory from "enemy" strategic ballistic missiles. A considerable part of this system is to be based in space and incorporates means for destroying missiles based on new physical principles (lasers, particle beam weapons, and so forth).

Sums running into many billions have already been allocated to reach this objective. Intensive scientific research and design work is under way to develop experimental samples of individual elements of an all-embracing antimissile defense system. There are future plans to test them to demonstrate that the system will "work." Plans are being drawn up to deploy the system in sequential parts as the corresponding technological problems are solved. Special commands and control centers are being set up for space systems for military purposes.

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Encountering resistance to the so-called "defense initiative" both from the American public and from abroad, a broad propaganda campaign has been launched in Washington in which attempts are being made to provide every kind of justification in people's eyes for the White House's course which aims to militarize space. The publication of the above-mentioned brochure was just one such attempt. Complaining that they are simply not understood on this question, people in Washington have served up a new helping of propaganda inventions, fact juggling, and even overt falsification designed to awaken the "uncomprehending" and wavering to the "advantages" of the "star wars" program advanced by the U.S. Administration.

THE FIRST INVENTION. Realizing that people all over the world are deeply worried by the ever-increasing avalanche of U.S. war preparations, the creators of the "strategic defense initiative" place the main emphasis on portraying the creation of an all-embracing ABM system with space-based elements as a means of strengthening strategic stability. U.S. leaders declare that they have opened up "encouraging prospects that it will be possible to defend ourselves effectively" with an all-embracing ABM system and, they claim, to switch "from a strategy based on the threat of offensive might to a strategy that threatens no one." This, they say, will ensure the possibility of achieving "a more stable deterrence."

What is the real situation with respect to this question? The U.S. and USSR strategic nuclear forces have existed for over 30 years, and throughout this time, ever since their appearance, the Soviet Union has been forced in their creation and subsequent deployment to respond to the challenge of the United States, which has been seeking military superiority. The strategic parity achieved in the early seventies deprived the United States of the possibility of blackmailing the USSR with the nuclear threat and forced it to embark on strategic arms limitation talks.

The USSR and the United States then reached a clear understanding that under conditions of parity in strategic offensive forces the acquisition of an additional defensive potential by either side would be tantamount to the acquisition by it of the potential for a preemptive nuclear strike.

The logic of nuclear confrontation is such that the creation of a ramified ABM system by no means pursues defensive aims but is an integral element of a course toward securing military superiority. Such a system would undermine the strategic parity of forces and would destabilize the strategic situation as a whole. In order to restore the disrupted parity under those conditions, in response the other side would be forced to strengthen its own strategic potential either by directly building up its own offensive forces or by supplementing them with means of defense. In either case all this would lead ultimately to an unlimited arms race.

The recognition by the USSR and the United States of the interconnection between offensive and defensive strategic systems was expressed in the simultaneous signing on 26 May 1972 of the unlimited-duration treaty on the limitation of ABM systems and the interim agreement on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. The ABM treaty became the cornerstone of the whole process of limiting and reducing nuclear armaments. "The sides," the treaty says, "consider that effective measures to limit ABM systems would be a substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms and would lead to a decrease in the risk of an outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons." In other words, only mutual restraint in the sphere of ABM systems makes it possible to advance along the path of limiting and reducing offensive arms.

It is precisely this key tenet regarding the interconnection between strategic offensive and defensive arms that the American advocates of "star wars" are now undermining.

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They are making out that the sides earlier arrived at this tenet not as a result of a recognition of the role of ABM systems as catalysts in the arms race, but merely as a result of the absence at that time of the technical potential for creating effective ABM systems.

Actually, such an interrelationship between strategic offensive and defensive systems is of a permanent nature and exists objectively. It does not disappear, either, with the emergence of the possibility of developing technically more sophisticated and more effective ABM systems. On the contrary, the development of such systems would affect the correlation of the sides' strategic forces even more tangibly and would render it extremely unsteady and unstable. Furthermore, the danger of a nuclear war being unleashed, with all its consequences for mankind, would increase sharply. Expert calculations indicate that, even if both sides possessed approximately equivalent large-scale ABM systems, even the most insignificant differences in their efficiency would be likely to substantially undermine strategic parity and destabilize the entire strategic situation. In addition to this, sober-minded scientists in the United States itself correctly point out that the actual work on implementing the program Washington announced is in itself of a provocative and destabilizing nature, regardless of its ultimate results.

SECOND INVENTION. U.S. Administration spokesmen argue a great deal that the development of an all-embracing ABM system with space-based components supposedly pursues the "humanitarian" goal of rendering strategic nuclear missile weapons "unnecessary" and "obsolete" and almost opens the way to the liquidation of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, all actions by the U.S. Administration provide evidence that in reality, something completely different is intended. In embarking on the implementation of its "space wars" program, Washington by no means intends to abandon its multibillion [dollar] programs to build up all components of its so-called strategic triad, primarily ballistic missiles. What "obsolescence" of missiles can they be talking about when the U.S. Administration is developing, in parallel with the large-scale ABM system, six new types of strategic offensive weapons. The Pentagon intends to have the new MX ICBM's by 1986, the Midgetman by the early nineties, and the new sea-launched Trident II strategic missiles by 1989. It is developing 2 new types of heavy bombers and is planning to deploy over 12,000 long-range cruise missiles of all basing modes.

When Washington talks about "giving up ballistic missiles," it has in mind the Soviet ICBM's which form the foundation of the USSR's strategic might. It thinks that, by significantly reducing their numbers, it would substantially weaken the potential for a retaliatory strike by the Soviet Union. And all this is taking place while the U.S. missile-carrying submarine fleet is being reequipped with ballistic missiles carrying the potential for a nuclear first strike (Trident II), while the United States has its first-strike nuclear missiles in West Europe, and while there is unrestricted deployment around the USSR of long-range cruise missiles of all basing modes and of new conventional weapons whose efficiency approximates that of nuclear means.

Things are no better as regards the American leaders' assurances that the United States intends, by means of its future ABM system, to supposedly "defend" its European allies. In actual fact, Washington is not very much concerned with the fate of Europeans. The advantages of deploying American space weapons are frankly argued in the United States since this would make it possible to conduct a nuclear conflict over Europe and not over the United States.

The real purpose of the U.S. "initiative" in "strategic defense" is not to strengthen but to undermine strategic stability. The "reliable ABM shield," of which people in Washington are dreaming, is nothing but a desire to create an opportunity to carry out a nuclear attack from behind this shield and deflect a retaliatory strike of retribution by the USSR.

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It is therefore a question not of weapons for defense against nuclear means but of new weapons to back up nuclear aggression.

But the people in Washington are forgetting that the person [tot] against whom these decisions are made will not be sitting idly by. He will do everything to thwart the aggressor's adventurist plans. And they will undoubtedly be thwarted. The United States will never acquire military superiority over the socialist countries, even if they perch their new arms up in space. In that case they would achieve just one thing -- the sharp intensification of the danger of a nuclear catastrophe and a pointless squandering of the material and intellectual resources of their country and all mankind. The U.S. "star wars" plans are by no means a boon, but a deadly threat to the peoples.

THIRD INVENTION. In an attempt to mislead people, the U.S. leaders state that the "strategic defense initiative" is being implemented exclusively within the framework of scientific research and experimental design work and that this work allegedly poses no real threat of the deployment of a comprehensive ABM system and does not violate any existing U.S. arms limitation commitments, above all none stipulated by the ABM treaty.

Not one word of these claims is true. It is clear that billions of dollars are not being spent on scientific research and experimental design work out of love for science and technical discoveries. The tests on components of the large-scale ABM system which are both already under way and envisaged by the Pentagon are directly aimed at creating conditions in which it would just be necessary to take a decision on the practical deployment of the relevant means. They want to present the USSR with the fait accompli of the already predetermined appearance in the United States in the near future of comprehensive ABM defenses, and, if possible, to obtain the Soviet side's consent to such actions.

It is understandable that the Soviet Union will not stand idly by watching to see how the U.S. "research" turns out but will in its turn be forced to take the necessary measures. That is why excuses about "research" do not alter the crux of the matter. The U.S. plans seriously undermine the basis of the process of limiting the arms race. They are not only an obstacle to any agreements on nuclear arms limitation but directly program [programirovat] an arms race.

The commissioning of a comprehensive ABM system with space-based elements is only possible at the cost of scrapping [likvidatsiya] the ABM treaty. The carrying out of extensive scientific research and experimental design work and the conducting of practical tests of individual components of the system will objectively lead to this most important Soviet-U.S. treaty being undermined. Pentagon representatives themselves have been forced to admit that this is so. "At the present stage...we are conducting research work aimed at determining whether an entirely reliable system can be created. If it can we will have to go beyond the framework of the ABM treaty," U.S. Defense Secretary C. Weinberger stated unapologetically on 12 September 1984. Not even General Abrahamson, the leader of the ABM program, tries to hide the Pentagon's true intentions; on 17 December 1984 he stated that "when ever part of a comprehensive ABM system has been developed and is ready for use, the United States will have to come to an agreement with the USSR on modifying the ABM treaty, since certain of its provisions will be at odds with the system's tasks."

Washington figures are not embarrassed that the creation of a comprehensive ABM system with space-based elements negates the basic provision of the ABM treaty -- the sides' commitment not to create ABM defenses of a country's territory.

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Nor are they embarrassed by the fact that the ban enshrined in the treaty on the creation of components and space-based ABM systems and the restrictions on the creation of such systems based on new physical principles are also being violated. They also want to derail many other multilateral agreements currently in force, such as the 1963 treaty prohibiting nuclear tests in the three environments, the 1967 treaty on the principles governing the activities of states in the exploitation and use of outer space, and the 1977 convention on the prohibition of hostile influences on the environment.

Continuing the line toward the violation of its international commitments, the United States is vainly counting on hiding behind unfounded accusations against the USSR alleging that it is not observing the ABM treaty and other agreements. It is clear why these accusations are being leveled. It is also clear who is burdened by the agreements that have been signed and who is seeking ways of avoiding their fulfillment and, indeed, of directly violating them.

The United States' so-called "research" in the field of the development of ABM defense with space-based elements is leading to the creation of a situation in which the entire system of international law, which for the time being is still curbing the states' military activeness, might be jeopardized, a situation in which it would become completely impossible to achieve constructive accords on arms limitation and reduction.

THE FOURTH INVENTION. In seeking to persuade Americans of the need for the United States to create an all-embracing ABM system, the Washington leaders would like to ascribe to the Soviet Union some programs for creating ABM defense for the country's territory. The Soviet Union has no such plans, and Washington is well aware of the fact. That is why it is deliberately obscuring the issue, as the saying goes: Either the Russians are on the point of creating an all-embracing ABM system or they have already created it. Inasmuch as there is no proof of this, for greater "persuasiveness" mention is made of the Soviet Union's possession of a limited ABM system and of an air defense system.

The authors of these fabrications aimed at the uninitiated are obviously not in the least embarrassed by the fact that the limited ABM system (one-region ABM defense) has been created in the USSR in accordance with the provisions of the ABM treaty (The United States had previously created a similar system) and does not even remotely resemble the broad-scale ABM system with space-based elements thought up in the United States. It is also clear to every unbiased person that the Soviet Union's air defense system bears no relation to ABM defense.

In addition the arguments used on this issue by the defenders of the "strategic defense initiative" are blatantly inconsistent. On the one hand they seem to believe that to obtain the promised "stabilizing effect" both antagonistic sides — the United States and the USSR — should have all-embracing ABM systems. Nonetheless Washington officials state without a trace of embarrassment that the situation will be "stable" if only the United States has such a system on a unilateral basis, and the sooner the better. If the Russians are the first to create such a system then, according to Weinberger, "it would be very, very dangerous in the world... It would be very powerfully reminiscent of a world in which the Russians had nuclear weapons and the United States had none."

There's the defensive arguments "stabilizing" role which Washington is hypocritically discussing. U.S. militarists have a good idea of the consequences of the creation of an all-embracing ABM system by one side and it is for precisely that reason that they are persistently seeking this for the United States.

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Also clear in light of this is the point of attempts to unfoundedly attribute their own dangerous intentions in this field to the Soviet Union and to conceal their own efforts to undermine equilibrium and acquire strategic superiority over the USSR.

Despite the propaganda efforts the Washington administration is making to justify the creation of an all-embracing ABM system with space-based elements, the opposition to this "initiative" is growing both in the United States itself and beyond. The opponents of the U.S. Administration's plans include eminent military and political specialists who have held leading posts in previous U.S. Administrations, the leaders of a number of NATO countries, and representatives of the public.

The U.S. leaders are being cautioned — they are being persistently warned that the "star wars" idea is a very dangerous blunder.

A blunder from the political viewpoint. It is impossible to lay claim to the pursuit of a realistic and responsible policy and at the same time to gamble on creating ever new weapons, to reject the arms limitation accords which have been reached, and to disregard the interests of the security of the peoples, including their own people.

A miscalculation from a scientific and technical viewpoint. This was stated very clearly by members of the USSR Academy of Sciences in their appeal to all the world's scientists. Their opinion concurs with the authoritative statement by the presidents and representatives of 36 academies of sciences of various countries. It is shared by American scientists who describe the assertions about the possibility of creating an "absolute ABM defense" as "the U.S. Administration's most irresponsible statements of late."

Finally, a very dangerous miscalculation from a military viewpoint: The development of work on creating a new ABM system does not strengthen America's security but is a step taking us closer to the threshold of nuclear war, for which the United States will not escape retribution. Attempts to militarize space will inevitably result just in a still more threatening twist to the arms race spiral, for which all responsibility will lie with the present U.S. Administration.

The rapid development of space technology, the opportunities that have emerged for using space for military purposes, and the efforts which the United States is stubbornly undertaking in this direction have made the problem of preventing the space militarization the most urgent task of the present time. The creation of space strike armaments — if they cannot be banned — would be an extremely destabilizing factor and serve as an impetus for an essentially uncontrolled arms race.

The problem of the nonmilitarization of space affects the vital interests of all mankind. A fatal mistake will have been made if space becomes an arena of the arms race, a bridgehead for aggression. Everything must be done to prevent such a development of events.

The USSR advocates banning forever the use of force in space and from space with regard to the earth, as well as from the earth with regard to objects in space. No kinds of weapon — conventional, nuclear, laser, beam, or any other — must be launched into space or deployed there, whether in manned or unmanned systems. No space strike arms based on any principles of operation and any kind of basing must be created, tested, or deployed either for use in space or for use from space against targets on the earth, in the air, or at sea. Such means which have already been created must be destroyed.

Given a radical solution of the problem of the nonmilitarization of space, the way would be opened up to substantial reductions of nuclear arms on a reciprocal basis, right down to their total destruction, with, of course, strict observance of the principle of equality and identical security.

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On the other hand, it is obvious that it is now impossible to resolve the problem of nuclear arms in isolation from a ban on space strike arms. Questions of nuclear and space arms are organically interconnected, and they must be examined and resolved precisely as a package at the talks. The resolution of the question of space strike arms is of key, priority significance here. Talks on the problem of nuclear arms would be devoid of meaning and prospect without preserving the ABM treaty and without banning the militarization of space. This was stated very clearly and firmly in A.A. Gromyko's conversation with Soviet political observers.

The Soviet initiative, as a result of which talks on a whole range of questions relating to nuclear and space arms have been made possible, is an expression of the USSR's principled policy of ensuring real progress in the matter of lessening the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war and improving the entire international situation. We would like to hope that understanding of the responsibility which lies with the United States in connection with the upcoming talks will prevail in Washington, and the necessary practical conclusions will be drawn with regard to the task of ensuring their constructive development and achieving weighty concrete results for the benefit of the cause of peace and of reducing the threat of nuclear war.

It is not deception of one's partner and of public opinion that must be the aim of the talks — we cannot agree with such morality, K.U. Chernenko emphasized — but the search for mutually acceptable solutions which would accord with the interests of peace. The opportunity to elaborate such solutions must not be missed.

Possible Geneva 'Detonator'

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[Editorial: "Start In Geneva"]

[Text] And so, a new start has been made in Geneva. The talks between Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko and U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz were not yet negotiations proper, but rather the prelude to negotiations. The purpose of the meeting was to lay the groundwork for the achievement of mutually acceptable accords on a whole body of interconnected problems -- to prevent an arms race in outer space and at the same time ensure progress towards the radical reduction of nuclear armaments. The desirable, more, vitally necessary ultimate objective is the abolition of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union is ready to go the whole way to general and complete disarmament.

Big things often begin with smaller ones. Time and again since the war the U.S.S.R. has displayed good will, taken the initiative, expecting the other side to reciprocate, hoping that the example will be followed. It voluntarily refrained from seeking military bases, unilaterally reduced its own armed forces, ended the testing of nuclear weapons and the deployment of missiles. Absence of reciprocity can never discourage those who are certain that they are in the right, who believe in the triumph of common sense which demands that a stop be put to the insane and costly race in which there can be no winners and which could reach a point where all human development is brought to an end. Faith in reason dictated also the Soviet Union's decision not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. And now, when people the world over are increasingly coming to realize how great a threat to peace and all humanity looms from outer space, it has made another constructive move, unilaterally undertaking the commitment not to put anti-satellite weapons into orbit (the commitment also extends to test launchings).

The Soviet Union is ready to ban nuclear tests altogether. It is ready also to freeze nuclear arsenals. There are no real measures for limiting the arms race and bringing about actual disarmament that the Soviet Union is not ready to accept.